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**STATISTICAL CHALLENGES IN ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE  
MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OTHER INTERNATIONALLY  
AGREED DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

(Item 5 of the provisional agenda)

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The present document summarizes major data gap issues, particularly those of availability and consistency, and their implications for both national and regional assessments of progress. In addition, it highlights emerging solutions to these statistical challenges.

The present document proposes that ESCAP programmes explore, through technical cooperation projects and technical assistance, the opportunities presented by the 2010 round of population and housing censuses and by the administrative records and vital registration systems for increasing data availability. The present document advocates increasing the analytical capacity of national statistical systems in order to monitor the Millennium Development Goals. Moreover, it supports the recommendations made by the Workshop on Statistics for Monitoring the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific, organized by ESCAP/SIAP/UNDP/ADB and held from 31 July to 2 August 2006. These recommendations urge better coordination between international and national statistical systems and among data producers within countries/areas in order to improve the consistency in the contents of databases utilized for tracking and assessing progress.

The present document proposes actions and strategies for strengthening statistical capacity and promoting coordination among statistical agencies with the aim of increasing data availability and consistency. Points for discussion by the Committee are contained in paragraph 43.

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## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL ASSESSMENTS

1. The adoption of 18 time-bound and quantitative global targets and the corresponding 48 indicators provides the basis for a systematic and harmonized mechanism for measuring progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the global, regional and national levels. Since 2001, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has reported annually on global progress. Through September 2006, 171 national MDG reports had been issued by 146 countries, including 35 countries/areas in Asia and the Pacific. The tripartite initiative of ESCAP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has tracked and analysed the progress in achieving the MDGs across the region and has issued two reports, *Promoting the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty Reduction*<sup>1</sup> and *A Future Within Reach: Reshaping Institutions in a Region of Disparities to Meet the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific*,<sup>2</sup> as well as an update, *The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2006*.<sup>3</sup>

2. The MDG reports have become a powerful advocacy and alliance-building tool among development partners. For an increasing number of countries, the national MDG report provides an objective basis for determining national priorities and identifying linkages between national goals and regional and global goals. The various analyses suggest that the major defining features of a successful poverty reduction strategy are a solid analytical and strategic foundation; a results orientation; a medium- to long-term perspective backed by sound costing and budgeting; and the institutional capacity to implement the strategy. The analytical foundation starts with the availability to Governments of timely, reliable and relevant data that are used appropriately to inform policy decisions, monitor progress and evaluate the results of poverty reduction efforts.

3. In its unique role as the pan-regional intergovernmental forum for promoting development through regional and subregional cooperation and integration in Asia and the Pacific, ESCAP provides opportunities for exploring the policy implications of progress, or a lack thereof, in achieving the MDGs at both the national and regional levels. Through the regional MDG reports, it identifies and promotes the potential for partnerships at the regional and global levels that redound to optimal benefits to members and associate members. These reports ensure a common voice and inform public discussion on policy priorities for achieving the MDGs in the region.

4. Despite the incontrovertible importance of statistical data in general and specifically in the context of achieving the MDGs and the other internationally agreed development goals, the response

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<sup>1</sup> ESCAP and United Nations Development Programme, *Promoting the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: Meeting the Challenges of Poverty Reduction* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.F.29).

<sup>2</sup> ESCAP, Asian Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme, *A Future Within Reach: Reshaping Institutions in a Region of Disparities to Meet the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.F.27).

<sup>3</sup> ESCAP, Asian Development Bank and United Nations Development Programme, *The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2006*, 2006.

to the demand for data for indicators by official statistical systems in the ESCAP region is inadequate in several aspects and for many reasons. The present document discusses major data gap issues, particularly those of availability and consistency, and their implications for both national and regional assessments of progress. It also highlights emerging solutions to these statistical challenges.

## II. DATA CHALLENGES

5. Quantitative tools for tracking and assessing the progress in achieving the stated goals and targets require annual time series data. As a minimum requirement, the data values for any indicator series should include reliable estimates for at least two periods, ideally the baseline year and the current year. Two is the minimum number of points in time needed to be able to assess progress. As the MDG indicators measure phenomena that change slowly, accurate measures of true progress require that the two data values be three to five years apart. The available values should be comparable across time in terms of consistency in concepts, reference populations and data collection methods.

6. Indicator values based on national averages may mask disparities within countries/areas; analyses featuring comparisons across subgroups reveal these inequalities and enhance the utility of the assessments in identifying relevant and targeted interventions. Thus, data values need to be available not only at the national level but also at relevant disaggregated levels, such as subnational geographic area, gender and ethnicity.

7. Meeting these specifications clearly remains difficult for many national statistical systems and presents data and analytical challenges in preparing and utilizing databases for tracking national, regional and global progress. Some of the main issues are described below:

(a) An indicator value for the reporting period is not available because the system does not produce the required data, such as poverty incidence and maternal mortality. When, if at all, should imputation be done? How is this best done when there is no data available? How is this best done when there is partial time series data?

(b) The data sources for an indicator differ across time periods, for example, contraceptive prevalence rates are estimated from a demographic and health survey in one year and an ad hoc safe motherhood survey in another year, or the source is the “same demographic and health survey” across the years, but the design of the survey has changed. Is it advisable to carry out a trend analysis, assess progress and report on the results of the analysis in this case?

(c) Two or more estimates are presented from different sources, for example, enrolment rates from the administrative records of the education ministry, a household survey and a recent census. How does one decide which the “best” source is?

(d) Measures of change may reflect changes other than real changes, such as those due to fluctuations in the magnitudes of the underlying populations; for example, a drop in the girl-boy ratio in primary education may reflect a change in the sex ratio rather than an actual drop in the proportion of girls in school. How can the measures of progress be best presented and interpreted?

8. Indicator values used for preparing MDG reports at any level should ideally be based on data and estimates provided by the national statistical systems. Thus, the database for the monitoring indicators available in a country/area should be the source of data for regional and global reporting. Regional and global assessments of progress are based on aggregate measures derived from country/area data. For the resulting aggregates to be valid, however, statistical definitions, standards and classifications, as well as practices in data collection, processing and estimation that produce data on the indicators at the national level, should be uniform across countries/areas. In addition, the points of time for which data are available should be consistent. These conditions do not necessarily hold, which poses a challenge for regional assessments.

9. The MDG reports published jointly by ESCAP, UNDP and ADB and the annual global assessments were based on the data from the global MDG indicator database maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division (see the official United Nations site for the MDG indicators: <http://mdgs.un.org>). For each MDG indicator, the most competent international agency (the “custodian” agency) is responsible for compiling the internationally comparable official data that comprise the global database. In many cases, the designated agency is also responsible for gathering the data from national statistical systems through a regular mechanism of periodic data collection (for example, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)). In other cases, the custodian agency compiles data collected mainly through surveys sponsored and, in some cases, carried out by the agency itself (for example, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), WHO).

10. Data used in global and regional assessments do not always match the data Governments use in their own monitoring of progress because these may not be reported by the members and associate members to the custodian agencies. On the other hand, the custodian agencies may have modified country/area data or imputed indicator values when these country/area data are not available; thus, global and regional assessments are based on data that may differ from those used by members and associate members.

11. The ESCAP Statistics Division recently reviewed the capacity of members and associate members to collect data and produce MDG indicator data through three lenses:

(a) Members’ and associate members’ self-assessments of data gaps and limitations in training courses on statistics for MDG indicators conducted from April 2005 to February 2006 by the Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP);

(b) Analysis of data from country/area submissions to the ESCAP data collection initiative in July 2006;

(c) Evaluation of availability in the global MDG indicator database.

Findings from these lenses are summarized below. Also discussed are the implications of data gaps and differences in the national and global databases when assessing achievements at the regional level.

#### **A. Country-level challenges**

12. Participants from 33 countries in the region who attended a series of five SIAP/UNDP subregional training courses on statistics for MDG indicators cited the following as their most common challenges:

(a) There is no data for indicators on poverty and hunger, literacy, maternal mortality, prevalence and death rates for major diseases, and environment-related indicators;

(b) Even when data is collected, indicator data that are estimated are unreliable and, in the case of multiple sources, inconsistent;

(c) There is no disaggregated data by subnational area, sex or other subpopulation on many of the indicators;

(d) The indicator values are outdated, especially for Goals 4 to 6 because data collection and the production of estimates do not coincide with the MDG reporting cycle.

The intensity of the problem varied across countries, depending on the level of the development of the national statistical system and the extent of the centralization, or decentralization, of the system.

13. Through a questionnaire conducted in July 2006, ESCAP requested members and associate members to provide values of MDG indicators to be used as the basis for a study on data gaps, quality and consistency. ESCAP constructed a database and analysed 19 submissions on 43 indicators. In this study, data for an indicator is said to be “available” if there are at least two data values over the period from 1990 to 2006. Key findings are summarized below:

(a) Data for 22 of the MDG indicators were not available for half of the countries/areas; data for Goal 6 indicators were the least available, while data for education-related indicators were the most available;

(b) By looking at the ratio of the number of data points in the ESCAP database to the number in the global MDG indicators database, the study found that the data for malaria death and prevalence rates and for Goal 5 indicators were relatively more available for members and associate members;

(c) The average differences in the most recent year available for the two databases show that data for poverty-related and malaria-related indicators were more current in the national statistical systems than those in the global database;

(d) The differences in values contained in the two databases provide indications of data quality. The mean average percentage errors based on these differences show that, for values reported for the same year, at least 70 per cent of the values differ significantly, with the largest differences seen in data for the indicators for Goals 1, 6 and 7;

(e) An important subgroup for disparity analysis is subnational geographic area (for example, region, province, state and zone) within the countries/areas. Of the 13 members and associate members that provided subnational values for the ESCAP questionnaire, those with decentralized statistical systems had fewer disaggregated statistics. This may be because only national statistical offices were sent the questionnaire, but it may also be indicative of a coordination problem among the different producers in the system. Data for the indicators for Goals 4, 5 and, to some extent, 6 were relatively more disaggregated.

14. Participants in the training courses and the regional workshop observed that, in the case of some indicators, data are not produced because they are not relevant to country/area circumstances, such as malaria in cold and dry countries/areas, underweight children in rich countries/areas and populations under the one dollar a day poverty line in Pacific island developing countries/areas. Some indicators, such as condom use at last high risk sex, are difficult to measure because of the cultural sensitivity to the issue.

15. Data gaps are admittedly due to the lack of statistical capacity on the part of members and associate members to produce the broad range of statistics required. An analysis of the global MDG indicators database shows that the size and level of the development of the country/area are two key factors in explaining the lack of capacity to produce data for the MDG indicators. For example, small island developing States and least developed countries were able to provide, on average, data for 17 and 22 indicators respectively, while all the other countries/areas were able to provide data for 30 indicators. Economies in transition have better coverage than least developed countries, with data for 27 indicators available on average; for these countries/areas, administrative reporting systems inherited from the Soviet era are the main data sources.

## **B. Regional reporting challenges**

16. An evaluation of the July 2006 version of the global MDG indicators database revealed the following data gaps (see annex II for details):

(a) Only 7 out of 55 (13 per cent) Asian and Pacific countries/areas have data available for at least two thirds of the indicators;

(b) Half of the countries/areas have data available for less than 50 per cent of the indicators;

(c) For 13 of the indicators, no country or area is able to provide 2 data points;

(d) Many data values are estimated or modified by the international agencies; most or all data values are agency estimates for more than 50 per cent of the indicators.

17. However, data availability in the global database increased substantially between 2003 and 2006. For 20 members and associate members (36 per cent), the increase was by at least 25 percentage points, and for 34 members and associate members (62 per cent), by at least 20 percentage points. While the availability of data for some indicators has increased tremendously, such as 0 to 100 per cent for the tuberculosis prevalence and death rate indicator, little progress has been made in data availability for others, such as the infant and child mortality and the primary enrolment indicators. There has even been a substantial reduction in data availability for the literacy rate and literacy parity, as previously submitted estimates have been withdrawn.

18. In summary, it is possible to rank the average data availability for members and associate members by Goal. For example, there is high availability for Goals 3, 4 and 7; medium availability for Goals 1, 2 and 5; and low availability for Goal 6. For Goal 6, the distribution of availability changes dramatically by indicator.

19. The limitations posed by gaps in time series data for tracking the progress at the regional level include the following:

(a) *Tracking progress:* In 2005, an ESCAP tracking exercise attempted to classify the progress of the 55 developing countries/areas in the region with respect to 23 indicators. However, in 35 per cent of the 1,265 classification decisions required, no assessments could be made because data were not available;

(b) *Interpreting measures of change:* Revisions to historical data made by replacing values or through deletions affect measures of change as these may be artifacts and not real change;

(c) *Aggregating:* The regional assessments require the aggregation of national values and this begs for a decision on whether or not to apply weights. When weighted aggregates are more appropriate, such as analyses that pertain to the overall situation of people in the region regardless of where they live, the 2005 regional tracking exercise used population numbers from the *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision* for most of the indicators.<sup>4</sup> However, not all reference populations are available for all countries/areas and all years. For example, urban and rural population numbers are available at only five-year intervals.

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision*, Vol. I: Comprehensive Tables (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XIII.5).



**C. Inconsistencies in data: to impute or not to impute?**

20. Inconsistency refers to the differences in indicator values in the global MDG indicators database and indicator values produced by countries/areas. Values for the same time period may differ, or the years for which data are available differ. For the 19 members and associate members in the ESCAP study, data values provided and those in the global database generally refer to the same years, but may have different values. For some indicators, many more data points and more updated values are available in the country databases but not in the global database.

21. The main reasons for these differences include:

(a) No reporting of data:

(i) Data produced at the country/area level are not made available to the international custodian agency for various reasons, including: the questionnaire is addressed to the “wrong” department, possibly because of a lack of coordination between the national statistical office and the statistical units associated with various ministries, particularly the health and education ministries; the questionnaire is too burdensome to fill in; the deadline is not met; and the agency does not solicit data from the country/area;

(ii) There is a lag between the time when country/area data is made available to the custodian agencies and the time when it is made available in the global MDG indicator database, perhaps due to the long production process of the international agencies concerned;

(b) Modifications:

(i) International agencies modify country/area data when these are not internationally comparable due to the differences in concepts, definitions, standards and classifications applied in the data production process;

(ii) Data is also modified when they are deemed to be statistically unreliable due to errors that arise in the various phases of the statistical production process;

(c) Imputations:

(i) When data are not available, indicator data are imputed by the custodian agencies in order to fulfil the requirements for aggregating indicator values to obtain measures of progress at the subregional, regional and global levels.

22. The imputation of missing values in indicator series is an issue of concern for Governments because differences in government-provided and internationally imputed values sometimes lead to differences in assertions of achievements in regional and national reports. In addition, the integrity of the country/area data is seemingly challenged, but often Governments do not have access to the imputation procedures utilized by the custodian agencies.

23. The report of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals indicators, submitted to the Statistical Commission at its thirty-seventh session, proposes that a meaningful analysis of the progress at the regional or global level for a specific MDG indicator would require that at least two thirds of the countries and areas to be represented in the aggregate have at least two data points.<sup>5</sup> In the Asian and Pacific region, trends can be computed for only 21 indicators if the recommendations in the report are followed. Because data availability (17 per cent on average for all MDG indicators) is low overall, it would seem that without imputing for “missing” data, it would not be possible to measure the progress at the regional level.

24. The report of the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals indicators suggests that for the purpose of monitoring progress against MDGs at the global and regional levels, the key is to have sufficient representative countries rather than data for every country. More meaningful analysis would be obtained by having more reliable data for fewer countries, rather than imputing data using dubious methods. The report further recommends that there be no imputation of data at the country level unless the methodology has been reviewed and approved by an international panel of experts.<sup>6</sup>

### **III. MEETING THE DATA CHALLENGES: THE ROLE OF ESCAP**

25. On the recommendation of the Statistical Commission, at its thirty-seventh session,<sup>7</sup> the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2006/6 of 24 July 2006 on strengthening statistical capacity, in which, inter alia, it called on the regional commissions to support national efforts in building and strengthening national statistical capacity, in particular of developing countries.

26. Together with international agencies, the commissions may wish to explore statistical capacity-building activities in order to fill in data gaps, improve the quality and international comparability of the existing data and enhance members’ and associate members’ reporting on all MDGs.

27. At its sixty-second session, the Commission adopted resolution 62/10 of 12 April 2006 on strengthening statistical capacity in Asia and the Pacific. In the resolution, the Commission invited members and, as appropriate, associate members to give priority to the strengthening of their official statistical systems and encouraged members and, as appropriate, associate members and relevant international organizations and institutions with advanced statistical systems to share expertise.

28. As an immediate response to resolution 62/10, the Statistics Division of ESCAP organized, in partnership with SIAP, UNDP and ADB, the Workshop on Statistics for Monitoring the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific. Representatives of 33 countries in the

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<sup>5</sup> See E/CN.3/2006/15.

<sup>6</sup> See *ibid.*, para. 27.

<sup>7</sup> See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, Supplement No. 4* (E/2006/24-E/CN.3/2006/32), Chap. I, sect. A.

region and 11 regional and international organizations attended the workshop, which was held from 31 July to 2 August 2006. The objectives of the workshop were to share country experiences in integrating the MDGs into national development planning and to address the data needs and measurement challenges in effectively monitoring progress towards the MDGs, both at the national and subnational levels and for the regional and global assessments.

29. Collectively, the Economic and Social Council, the Statistical Commission and the regional commissions, along with the above-mentioned workshop, support the following courses of action:

- (a) Utilizing the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in order to meet data needs;
- (b) Launching special data collections for indicators for which most countries are not able to provide data, or revise the list of indicators through deletions or amendments;
- (c) For small countries/areas, selecting a subset of indicators to monitor that are most relevant to their circumstances;
- (d) Avoiding imputation unless specific country/area data are available for reliable imputations;
- (e) Improving the modalities that the custodian agencies use to consult with members and associate members when they carry out data modifications; and having the custodian agencies provide better metadata relating to their procedures in adjusting country/area data and imputing country-level estimates;
- (f) Giving national statistical offices greater responsibility for the national coordination of data requests related to the MDGs.

30. Many of the statistical challenges discussed in the present document already have solutions waiting to be implemented; statistical capacity-building in all its modes accelerates their implementation. Others require innovative approaches and methods; the knowledge required is gained from technical studies that are grounded in country experiments and expert collaborations. The present document proposes that ESCAP programmes:

- (a) Undertake technical cooperation projects in order to explore the opportunities presented by the 2010 round of population and housing censuses and by the administrative records and vital registration systems for increasing data availability;
- (b) Provide technical assistance and training in order to increase the analytical capacity of the national statistical systems to monitor the MDGs;
- (c) Facilitate better coordination between international and national statistical systems and among data producers within countries/areas in order to improve the consistency in the contents of the databases utilized for tracking and assessing progress.

### **A. Strengthening national statistical capacity**

31. Tracking the progress in achieving the MDGs is an exercise that has brought both the importance and the limitations of current data and statistical systems to the fore, which is unprecedented to date. Capacity-building and other initiatives undertaken at the national and international levels are encouraging. The initiatives of ESCAP aimed at improving the assessment of the progress made towards achieving the MDGs are a reflection of its broader mandate to enhance the capacity of national statistical systems. It is doing so by strengthening national statistical infrastructure and promoting the improvement of data quality and international comparability and the appropriate use of new techniques.

32. With improving MDG-related data as a cornerstone, the statistical capacity-building programme of ESCAP proposes to strengthen the utilization of administrative records and vital registration systems for official statistics. This would ensure that the census questionnaire for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses would collect key data for tracking progress through a regional census programme and enhance analytical capacity through methodological studies, the development of guidelines and training.

#### **1. Improving administrative records and vital registration systems**

33. Administrative records are potentially a regular source of data for many MDG indicators, but their use has so far been severely limited in the developing countries/areas of the region because of their poor quality and undercoverage. UNICEF estimates, for example, that 63 per cent of children in South Asia and 19 per cent in East Asia and the Pacific are not registered. Thus, estimates based on administrative sources are often biased due to undercoverage; when these estimates are aggregated, they are inconsistent with estimates produced at the national level through household surveys or through censuses.

34. In order to improve the quality, and consequently the use, of vital registration systems for generating statistics, it is necessary to address such problems as the following:

- (a) Registration forms are not well designed, and the definitions and classifications in use are not in line with international recommendations;
- (b) There is a lack of coordination among the various institutions responsible for registrations;
- (c) There are difficulties in registering adult mortality and in attributing cause of death accurately;
- (d) There is a lack of technical expertise and equipment.

Solutions are within reach, however. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of innovative data collection techniques, such as sample registration surveys and verbal autopsy

techniques. Recent efforts have been made by UNICEF, ADB and Plan International to increase birth registrations and by Health Metrics Network to improve health information systems.

35. The secretariat proposes to assist national statistical systems in increasing the use of administrative/registration sources to produce MDG data and other statistics by improving the quality of key administrative records and vital statistics. This would develop recommendations/guidelines; conduct training on the collection, processing and analysis of birth, migration and death records; and provide technical assistance to help Governments adapt the recommendations to their circumstances.

## **2. Regional census programme**

36. In addition to the traditional uses of the census, the secretariat views the 2010 round of population and housing censuses as a critical opportunity for improving national statistical capacity, strengthening basic statistical infrastructure, filling in data gaps and improving the quality of the MDG-related data, as well as promoting the use of the census to measure new and emerging priority issues. The secretariat has prepared a proposal for a multi-year regional statistical programme to promote the 2010 round of population and housing censuses in the Asian and Pacific region (see E/ESCAP/CPR(3)/4).

## **3. Increasing analytical capacity and promoting innovative approaches**

37. Increasing analytical capacity is deemed concomitant with improving data quality by furthering a better understanding of the limitations and potential use of the data. At the same time, the greater involvement of the national statistical offices in monitoring the MDGs could lead to enhanced analytical capacity in statistics in general.

38. Through methodological studies, the secretariat proposes to make available to countries practical guidelines and recommendations for dealing with major data gaps. These studies would identify good national and international practices and test innovative approaches. The studies would produce a methodology manual detailing the guidelines and recommendations and would include the experiences of members and associate members. Through regional and national workshops/training courses and technical assistance, members and associate members would be in a position to apply the guidelines and recommendations to produce the required trend data for upcoming MDG reports.

39. The secretariat envisions prioritizing training and technical assistance in order to support the efforts of members and associate members in implementing analytical tools, such as the construction of composite indices, the use of new software and database technologies, and the development of indicators that measure inputs and costs for achieving the MDGs. The use of survey data for subnational MDG indicators is generally limited because small areas are not usually well represented in samples drawn for national surveys. Estimation techniques, such as small-area estimation, could assist countries/areas in producing more reliable subnational data.

**B. Promoting coordination within national statistical systems and between them and the custodian agencies**

40. Participants in the ESCAP/SIAP/UNDP/ADB workshop recognized that, in their countries/areas, most of their national statistical offices did not have the mandate to monitor the progress in achieving the MDGs. Typically, their roles and responsibilities have been determined by ad hoc task forces created for the preparation of national MDG reports, but the requisite additional resources have not been provided, nor has a coordinating mechanism been created to assist them in carrying out their tasks.

41. The secretariat of ESCAP recognizes the important link between improving coordination both among data producers in national statistical systems and between national statistical systems and the custodian agencies and increasing MDG data availability and data consistency. In this regard, the ESCAP subprogramme on statistics (subprogramme 2) will take steps to improve the reporting of data practices by facilitating communication between the national and international statistical systems and by strengthening the coordination mechanism within countries/areas, particularly by advocating for the national statistical offices to play a central role in the MDG reporting process.

42. Drawing on the recommendations of the workshop concerning the need for many members and associate members to review and update statistical legislation for empowering national statistical offices with a central coordination role, the secretariat will promote the inclusion of appropriate activities under the national strategies for the development of statistics<sup>8</sup> and the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. By working closely with subregional organizations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, ESCAP can play a larger role in facilitating the coordination of donor activities in statistical capacity-building in the region.

**IV. POINTS FOR DISCUSSION**

43. The Committee is invited to consider the issues outlined in the present document and:

(a) To discuss and comment on the proposed statistical capacity-building activities described in section III A of the present document and to provide guidance on the prioritization of initiatives;

(b) To provide advice on how ESCAP can best promote better coordination among statistical agencies, as proposed in section III B.

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<sup>8</sup> See E/CN.3/2005/18.

## **Annex I. The Millennium Development Goals and Indicators\***

### **Goal 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

#### Indicators

1. Proportion of population below \$1 (1993 PPP) per day (World Bank)
2. Poverty gap ratio (incidence x depth of poverty) (World Bank)
3. Share of poorest quintile in national consumption (World Bank)
4. Prevalence of underweight children under 5 years of age (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF))
5. Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO))

### **Goal 2. Achieve universal primary education**

#### Indicators

6. Net enrolment ratio in primary education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO))
7. Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 (UNESCO)  
(Alternative indicator under development is "primary completion rate")
8. Literacy rate of 15-24 years old (UNESCO)

### **Goal 3. Promote gender equality and empower women**

#### Indicators

9. Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education (UNESCO)
10. Ratio of literate women to men, 15-24 years old (UNESCO)
11. Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (International Labour Organization (ILO))
12. Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (Inter-Parliamentary Union)

### **Goal 4. Reduce child mortality**

#### Indicators

13. Under-five mortality rate (UNICEF)
14. Infant mortality rate (UNICEF)
15. Proportion of 1 year-old children immunized against measles (UNICEF)

### **Goal 5. Improve maternal health**

#### Indicators

16. Maternal mortality ratio (World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA))
17. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (UNICEF)

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\* Relevant custodian agency is indicated in parentheses.

## **Goal 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases**

### Indicators

18. HIV prevalence among pregnant women aged 15-24 years (UNICEF, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), WHO)
19. Condom use rate of the contraceptive prevalence rate (United Nations Population Division)
- 19a. Condom use at last high-risk sex (UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO)
- 19b. Percentage of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO)
- 19c. Contraceptive prevalence rate (United Nations Population Division)
20. Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years (UNICEF, UNAIDS, WHO)
21. Prevalence and death rates associated with malaria (WHO)
22. Proportion of population in malaria-risk areas using effective malaria prevention and treatment measures (UNICEF)
23. Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (WHO)
24. Proportion of tuberculosis cases detected and cured under directly observed treatment short course DOTS (internationally recommended tuberculosis control strategy) (WHO)

## **Goal 7. Ensure environmental sustainability**

### Indicators

25. Proportion of land area covered by forest (FAO)
26. Ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to surface area (United Nations Statistics Division, calculated from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP))
27. Energy use (kilogram oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP (PPP) (the World Bank)
28. Carbon dioxide emissions per capita (Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center) and consumption of ozone-depleting chlorofluorocarbons (ozone-depleting potential tons) (UNEP Ozone Secretariat)
29. Proportion of population using solid fuels (WHO)
30. Proportion of population with sustainable access to an improved water source, urban and rural (WHO, UNICEF)
31. Proportion of population with access to improved sanitation, urban and rural (WHO, UNICEF)
32. Proportion of households with access to secure tenure (United Nations Human Settlements Programme)

## **Goal 8. Develop a global partnership for development**

### Indicators

Official development assistance (ODA)

33. Net ODA, total and to the least developed countries, as a percentage of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors' gross national income (OECD)



34. Proportion of total bilateral, sector-allocable ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services (basic education, primary health care, nutrition, safe water and sanitation) (OECD)
35. Proportion of bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors that is united (OECD)
36. ODA received in landlocked developing countries as a proportion of their gross national incomes (OECD)
37. ODA received in small island developing States as a proportion of their gross national incomes (OECD)

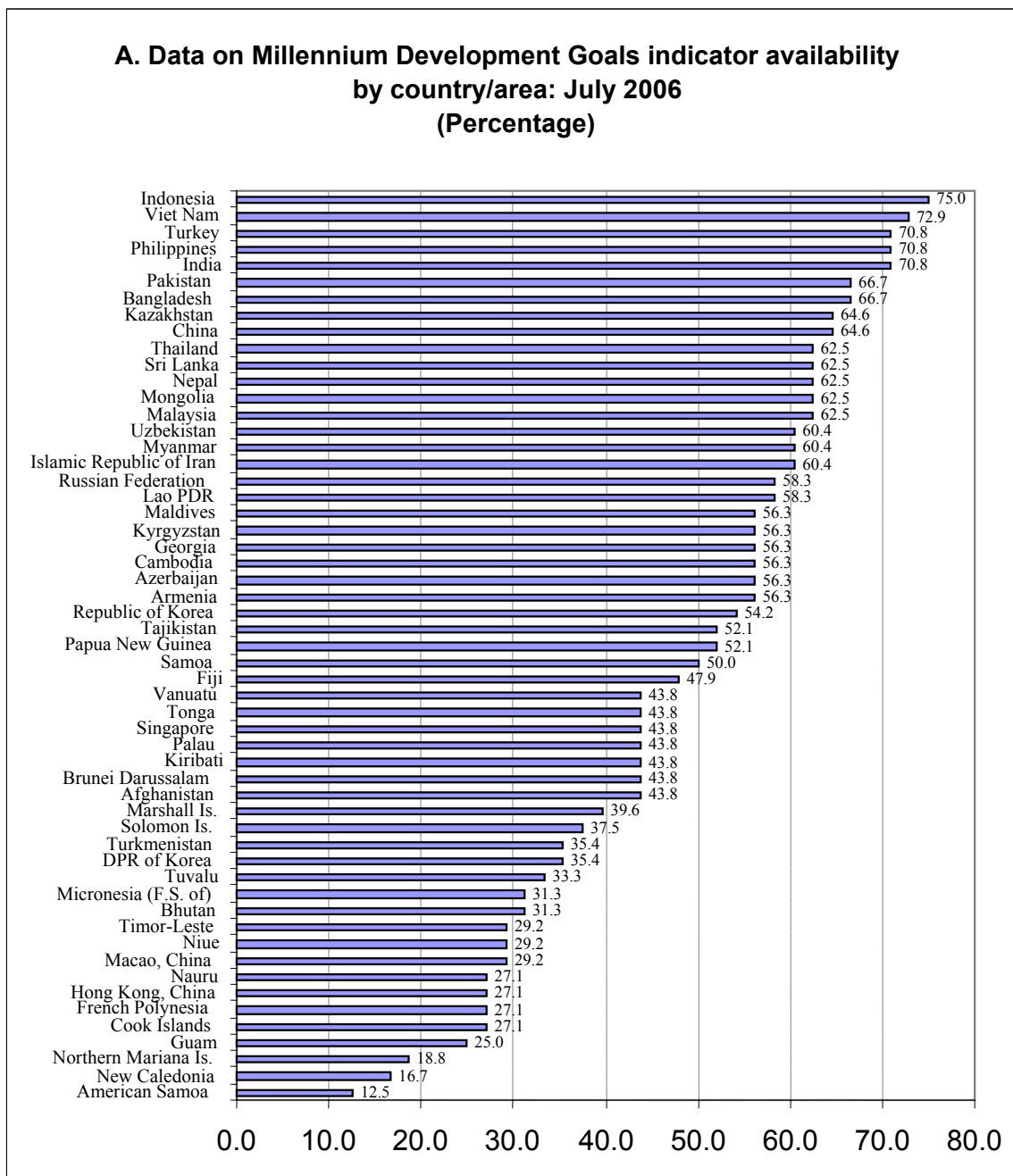
#### Market access

38. Proportion of total developed country imports (by value and excluding arms) from developing countries and least developed countries, admitted duty free (the World Trade Organization (WTO))
39. Average tariffs imposed by developed countries on agricultural products and textiles and clothing from developing countries (WTO)
40. Agriculture support estimate for OECD countries as a percentage of their gross domestic product (OECD)
41. Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity (OECD, WTO)

#### Debt sustainability

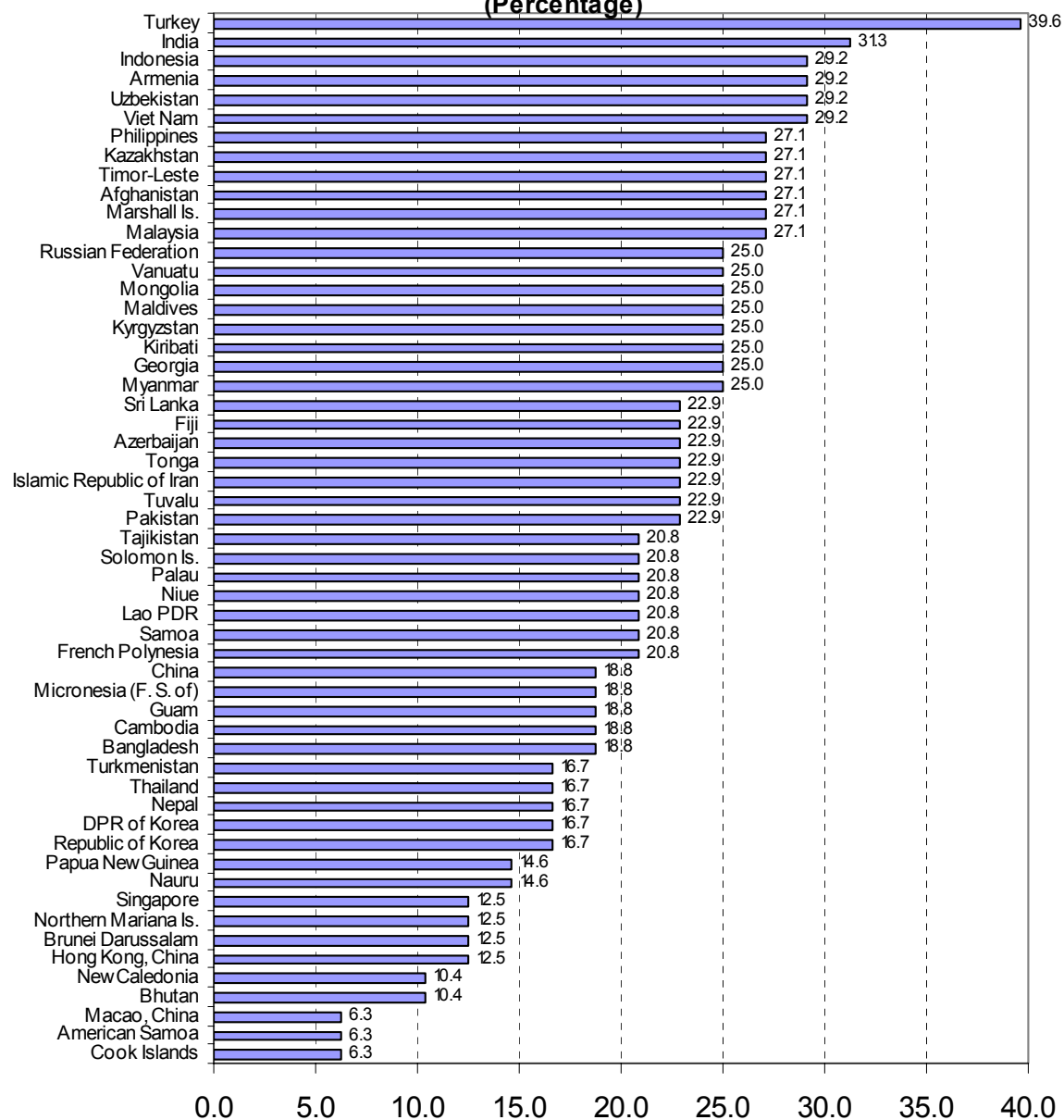
42. Total number of countries that have reached their heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) decision points and number that have reached their HIPC completion points (cumulative) (International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank)
43. Debt relief committed under the HIPC Initiative (IMF)
44. Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services (World Bank)
45. Unemployment rate of young people aged 15-24 years, each sex and total (ILO)
46. Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis (WHO)
47. Telephone lines and cellular subscribers per 100 population (International Telecommunication Union (ITU))
48. Personal computers in use per 100 population (ITU); Internet users per 100 population (ITU)

## Annex II. Availability\* of Data on Millennium Development Goals Indicators

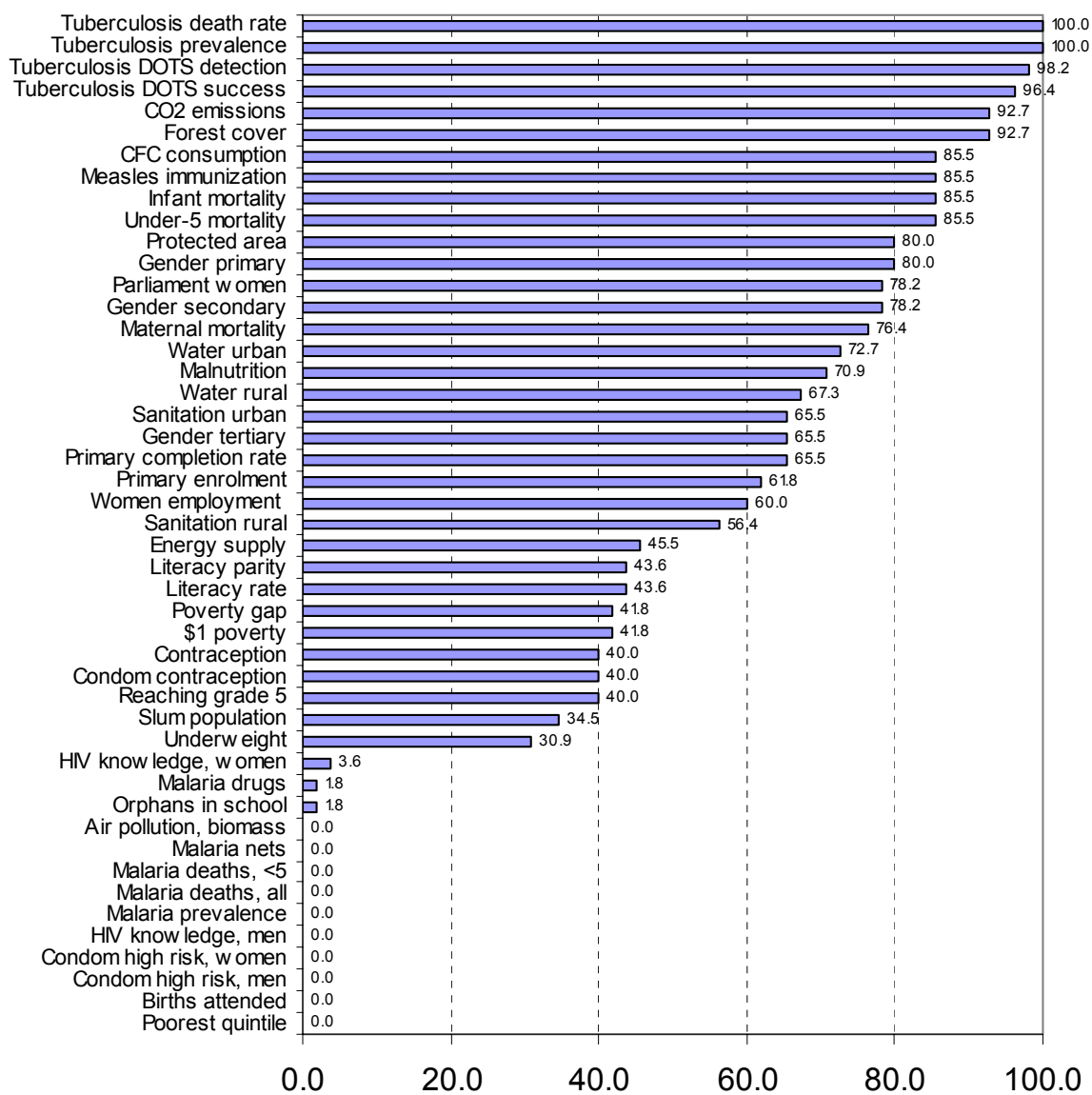


\*at least two data points

**B. Change of Millennium Development Goals indicator data  
availability by country/area: 2003-2006  
(Percentage)**



**C. Percentage of countries where data on Millennium Development Goals indicators are available: 2006**



**D. Change in the percentage of countries where data on  
Millennium Development Goals indicators are available:  
2003-2006**

